

My Vehicle Failed the Emissions Inspection. Now What?

◆ What happens if my vehicle fails an OBD II inspection?

There are three common reasons why a vehicle might fail the diagnostic emissions inspection: 1) Diagnostic Trouble Codes (DTC), 2) Readiness, and 3) Non-Communication. Vehicles that fail any component of emission testing must be repaired or the failure resolved before a valid inspection sticker can be issued for the vehicle. Vehicles failing the inspection will receive an orange temporary sticker. A vehicle that has failed inspection must be repaired and pass a reinspection or retest within 30 days. Upon passing the reinspection, the vehicle will receive a valid inspection sticker.

◆ What is a DTC?

Vehicles that fail due to Diagnostic Trouble Codes (DTC) do so because a situation has occurred which could lead to an increased level of emissions released from the vehicle. In most cases, the vehicle's Malfunction Indicator Light (MIL) is illuminated on the dash panel. The problem may not be noticeable or affect the vehicle's performance, but over time the situation could worsen and lead to increased inconvenience and expensive repairs. If your vehicle failed because of a DTC, the vehicle should be repaired before returning to a motor vehicle inspection station for a retest.

◆ What does it mean for a vehicle to be "Not-Ready"?

"Not Ready" failures imply that a vehicle's readiness monitors have not been fully reset. The onboard computer resets anytime there is an uncommon electrical event within the car. The most common causes are removing the battery cables, jumpstarting another vehicle, adding out-of-market electrical equipment to the vehicle, and clearing DTCs from the computer. When the onboard computer has been reset, the vehicle must be driven in a certain manner determined by the manufacturer, called a 'drive cycle'. This drive pattern usually involves a normal combination of city and highway driving for about two weeks. Contact your vehicle's manufacturer or LDEQ for specific drive cycles. There may be nothing wrong with your vehicle. After completing the drive cycle, return the vehicle to the motor vehicle inspection station for a retest.

◆ What does it mean for a vehicle to fail for "Non-Communication"?

Vehicles that fail due to non-communication fail because the vehicle's onboard computer did not send a signal to the emissions testing equipment. Occasionally, a vehicle can come off of the assembly line with defects. A non-communication can be the result of a poorly assembled OBD connection port, a blown fuse, or a combination of scenarios involving the inspection process. Check the vehicle's cigarette lighter to see if it works. If it does not, chances are the fuse is blown. Most manufacturers design vehicles so that the OBD and cigarette lighter run on the same circuit. The fuse is faulty if it is dark inside like the inside of a blown light bulb or if the electrical wires within the fuse are burnt apart and are not connected. In the event of a "non-comm", the motorist is instructed to contact the Emissions Challenge Station in Port Allen, where the vehicle will be retested and, if necessary, receive a separate diagnostic scan.

What if my vehicle fails the gas cap test?

If your vehicle fails the gas cap test, you will have to purchase a new cap made specifically for your vehicle. You are entitled to at least one free retest if you do so before your thirty-day temporary sticker expires.

What is the Challenge Station, and where is it located?

The Challenge Station is located at the Louisiana Technical College campus in Port Allen at 3233 Rosedale Road next to Port Allen High School. If you feel that your vehicle was not inspected properly or would like to challenge the results of your original test, a free retest is available. The Challenge Station is not authorized to issue state inspection stickers, but there are trained mechanics that will retest your vehicle for free to determine if your vehicle actually failed for the reason stated. Appointments are recommended, but walk-ins are welcome. The facility is open 8:30am – 4:30pm (Tuesday through Saturday) and can be reached by calling 342-8425. Vehicle owners whose vehicles failed because of a non-communication are encouraged to utilize this station.

Do I have to go to the Challenge Station to verify that my vehicle will not communicate?

If your vehicle fails because it failed to communicate, you should proceed to the Challenge Station for a free retest. If it does pass, you may return to the MVI station for your new sticker. If it fails again, a free secondary diagnostic can be performed on site to verify that there is nothing wrong with the vehicle.

Do I have to pay to get my vehicle retested if it fails?

The orange temporary sticker is valid for thirty (30) days, during which time you are entitled to one (1) free retest at the original MVI station. After your vehicle is repaired or the problem has been resolved, you may return to the original inspection station within the thirty-day period and receive the free retest. If your vehicle fails again, you may have to pay for any subsequent inspections. At any time, if you would like to challenge the inspection results, you can receive a free retest at the Emissions Challenge Station located in Port Allen. If your vehicle passes, you will be instructed to return to the original MVI station to receive a valid inspection sticker.